

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A system for verifying the purchase of a retail item by a customer comprising:

a label associated with the retail item, said label lacking a post-purchase machine-readable indicia;

a point of sale station having a point of sale encoding device, said encoding device providing a machine-readable post-purchase indicia associated with the label during purchase by the customer; and

a return station at a different location from a location of the point of sale station and having a detecting device for analyzing the label to determine whether the post-purchase machine-readable indicia is present.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said post-purchase machine-readable indicia is machine readable only.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said post-purchase machine-readable indicia is invisible.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said post-purchase machine-readable indicia is visible when radiated with far-red, infrared or ultraviolet radiation.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said encoding device provides said machine-readable indicia photochemically, thermalchromically, magnetically, electro-magnetically, optically, electro-optically, holographically, electrically or via radiofrequency.

6. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the composition of said label is selected from the group consisting of paper, plastic, photochromic material, thermachromic material, magnetic material, electrically conductive material, holographic material, a microprocessor, a microchip, or a memory chip.

7. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said label is comprised of a plurality of layers.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said label is a bar code.

9. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein a refund for the

retail item is conditioned upon the detection of the post-purchase machine-readable indicia by the detecting device.

10. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein said detector removes said machine-readable post-purchase indicia from said label after a refund is given to the customer.

11. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said machine-readable post-purchase indicia identifies the store where the retail item was sold.

12. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said machine-readable post-purchase indicia identifies the date and time of sale for the retail item.

13. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the machine-readable post-purchase indicia identifies the method of payment used to purchase the retail item.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for verifying the purchase of a retail item by a customer comprising:

providing a label associated with the retail item, said label lacking a machine-readable post-purchase indicia;

encoding a machine-readable post-purchase indicia associated with the label by a point of sale encoding device when the item is purchased by the customer; and upon return of said retail item analyzing said label with a detecting device to determine whether the machine-readable post-purchase indicia is present.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein a refund for the retail item is conditioned upon the detection of the post-purchase machine-readable indicia by the detecting device.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 wherein the encoding of the post-purchase indicia produces an invisible post-purchase indicia.

17. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said encoding device provides the machine readable indicia when the label is scanned during purchase.

18. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14 wherein the encoding is performed when the label is scanned during purchase.

19. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein the post-purchase indicia is removable after the retail item is exchanged or

refunded.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 wherein the post-purchase indicia is removable after the retail item is exchanged or refunded.

21. (New) The system of claim 5 wherein said encoding device is a radiofrequency encoding device.

22. (New) The system of claim 21 wherein the post-purchase machine-readable indicia of the label is detectable by radiofrequency.

23. (New) The system of claim 22 wherein the detecting device is a radiofrequency detecting device

24. (New) The system of claim 21 wherein said encoding device produces said post-purchase machine-readable indicia by radiofrequency.

25. (New) The system of claim 24 wherein said label comprises at least one of a semiconductor, a microprocessor, and a memory chip for storing said radiofrequency produced indicia.

26. (New) The system of claim 25 wherein said detecting device for analyzing the label to determine whether the post-purchase machine-readable indicia is present comprises a radiofrequency detector capable of detecting said radiofrequency indicia on said label.

27. (New) The system of claim 24 wherein the label comprises a plurality of layers to conceal the at least one of a semiconductor, a microprocessor, and a memory chip.

28. (New) The method of claim 14 wherein said encoding is done by radiofrequency.

29. (New) The method of claim 14 wherein said analyzing is done by radiofrequency.